

# Geography for Life

## The Ecological Trilogy

The relationships between living things and their environments are important to geographers. For example, geographers study the ways pollution affects ecosystems. They also study how the overuse of natural resources like rain forests and water affect the organisms that depend on them. The study of how living things interact with and depend on each other and the environment is called ecology. Geographers are also interested in human ecology—the ways human beings interact with and depend on the environment and each other. Southwest Asia is just one region in which geographers have studied human ecology.

In the 1960s a geographer developed a model he called the ecological trilogy. This model described how the three main ways of life in Southwest Asia depended on each other. Those three ways are life as a villager, as a pastoral nomad, and as a town- or city-dweller.

At the base of the trilogy were the peasant farmers who lived in the region's small villages. They served the city people and nomads by growing basic food crops like wheat and barley. Although they may not have wanted to do so, the villagers also provided the city with soldiers, tax money, and workers. On the other hand, cities and towns offered villages technological improvements, educational opportunities, and other services.

*The three parts of the ecological trilogy are shown in the scenes below. On the left, a farmer tends crops outside his village. In the center, nomadic herders take their flock to market. On the right, people live and work in a modern urban environment in Tehran.*

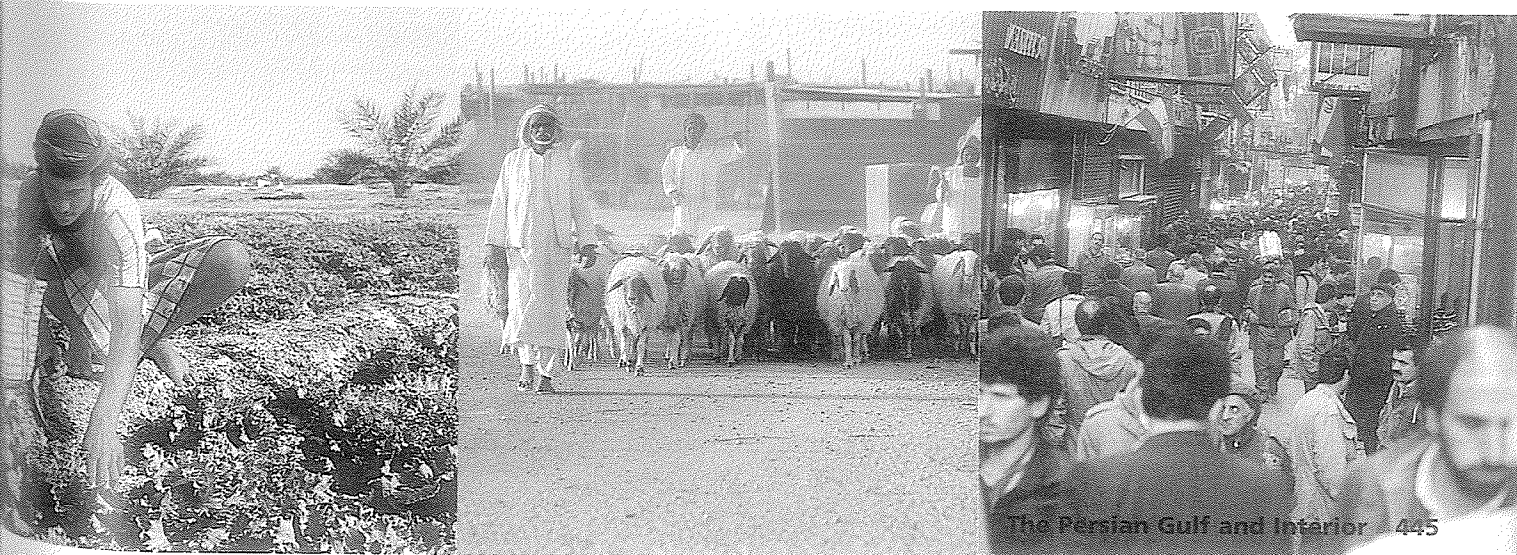
Nomads also had an important role in the trilogy. Nomads supplied villagers with animal products like cheese, meat, milk, and wool. They also provided desert herbs and medicines. City people supplied nomads with cooking utensils and factory-made clothing. However, city people and nomads interacted less than villagers and nomads.

New patterns of living in Southwest Asia have changed the relationships within the trilogy. In recent decades, government doctors, teachers, improved roads, cellular phones, and television have come to villages and nomads. Many villagers, particularly young people, move from rural areas to the city. When they arrive, the villagers change the culture of the city. Changing ways of life for nomads are also affecting this trilogy. As nomads settle in more permanent communities, the number of people who follow their herds declines. As the cities grow, they expand outward to engulf villages.

Although changes have occurred, each of the three parts of the ecological trilogy still supports the others. In addition, no matter where they may live now, individuals still identify themselves as city people, nomads, or villagers.

### Applying What You Know

- Summarizing** Which part of the trilogy serves as a base for the model? Why?
- Supporting a Point of View** How might the ecological trilogy of Southwest Asia differ from a similar model for the United States?



## Review

## Building Vocabulary

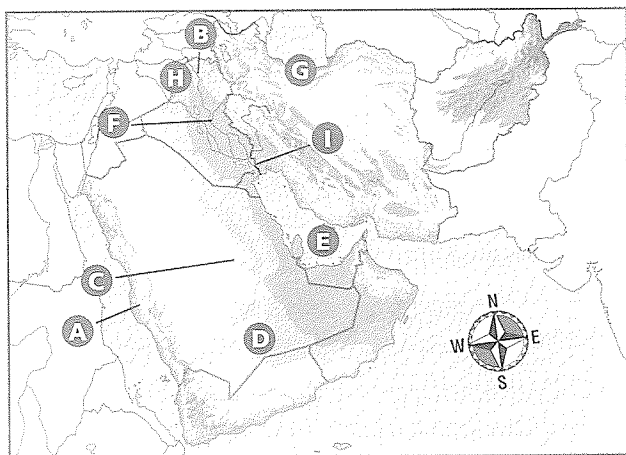
On a separate sheet of paper, explain the following terms by using them correctly in sentences.

exotic rivers	Shi'ism	OPEC
oasis	imams	ayatollahs
dynasty	Bedouins	theocracy
Sunni		

## Locating Key Places

On a separate sheet of paper, match the letters on the map with their correct labels.

Persian Gulf	Shatt al Arab	Mecca
Mesopotamia	Elburz Mountains	Baghdad
Tigris River	Rub' al-Khali	Riyadh



## Understanding the Main Ideas

## Section 1

1. **Physical Systems** In what ways has the plant life of the region adapted to the conditions there?

## Section 2

2. **Environment and Society** Why has Mesopotamia been such an attractive target for invasion throughout history?
3. **Places and Regions** What is the major language spoken in Iran? In Iraq, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia?

## Section 3

4. **Human Systems** What changes are taking place in the traditional rural economy and culture of the region?
5. **Human Systems** What are two important factors accounting for Saudi Arabia's influence in world affairs today?

## Thinking Critically

1. **Evaluating** What policies would you recommend to governments working to protect water resources in the region? Why would those policies not be practical for some countries? What geographic and economic effects might these policies have?
2. **Drawing Inferences and Conclusions** Why might stability in the Persian Gulf region be important to developed countries?
3. **Comparing and Contrasting** How do views about Islamic teachings and the role of Islam in society vary among governments in the region? How do cultural beliefs influence public policies regarding women in Afghanistan?

## Using the Geographer's Tools

1. **Analyzing Maps** Review the unit maps to study the climates and land use and resources of Iraq. In which climate region do you see large areas of commercial farming? What is the probable source of water for commercial farming there?
2. **Analyzing Statistics** Use the unit Fast Facts table to rank the countries of the region by GDP, from highest to lowest. Then prepare a second list, ranking them by literacy rate, from highest to lowest. Compare the two rankings. What does this comparison reveal about the relationship between educational level and a country's level of economic development?
3. **Creating a Population Pyramid** Use the HRW Web site to find statistics about Iran's population. Use those statistics to create a population pyramid that describes the population characteristics of Iran. Then predict future growth trends there.

## Writing about Geography

Imagine that you are part of a Bedouin family that is about to move to a city in Saudi Arabia. Write a short journal entry describing how your way of life is about to change. After you have completed your journal entry, proofread it to make sure that you have used standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation.



## Organizing Geographic Information

**Human Systems** Use Internet or library resources to identify the largest sources of oil imports into the United States. Also investigate how the amount of imported oil compares to the total produced from wells in the United States. Then plan, design, and create a graph that shows your findings.